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Juan Ruiz, *Book of Good Love (Libro de buen amor)* (1330/1343)

The *Book of Good Love*, selections 1:

1. The Debate Between the Greeks and the Romans
2. The Story of Pitas Payas, Painter from Brittany
3. Fable of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse

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Introduction:

The *Book of Good Love (Libro de buen amor)* (also known as the *Libro del Arcipreste*) was written in the fourteenth century by Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest from Hita, a town located to the northeast of Madrid, Spain. Little is known about the author and we have only three manuscripts (two from 1330 and one, a more elaborate version, from 1343, plus various fragments) that have been preserved and have come down to us through the centuries. We know, from various references to it, that it was popular in its time but basically forgotten in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century, when Spain was becoming interested in her cultural past, that it was rediscovered and published as a printed book. After that, hundreds of editions and numerous translations have been produced by distinguished scholars. Some even refer to Juan Ruiz as “The Spanish Chaucer;” indeed the *Book of Good Love* is one of the most important works of literature ever written in Spanish and has thus been the subject of thousands of articles and books written by scholars from around the world.

Perhaps the key to the *Book of Good Love*'s popularity lies in its complexity. It contains a curious mixture of sacred and profane poetry (with a prose prologue) that displays a vast knowledge of European literature (especially in French and Latin), religion (especially medieval Christianity), and law, along with a familiarity with the Islamic and Jewish cultures that were part of life at that time in Spain. It is a didactic text, with moral messages for Juan Ruiz's audience, the latter a mixture of both learned and unlettered people, some who read the text, and others who listened to it in oral performance. Intertwined, one can observe a keen sense of devotion along with a wild sense of humor and a playful display of the dualities of life through puns and ambiguities. In addition, the *Book of Good Love* reflects popular literature and customs of the times and displays a significant amount of originality and creativity. It contains 1728 rhymed stanzas of at least four verses each, in a number of poetic styles.¹ The book is organized in an unusual way with its various segments complementing one another and with a number of elements repeating themselves throughout the book, interweaving themselves in a pattern much like that of the interlace of some of the

¹The prevalent style in the *Book of Good Love* is known as *cuaderna vía*, with rhymed stanzas of four verses, each containing 14-16 syllables.



illuminations found in Medieval manuscripts. It can best be viewed as a performance text from which various segments can be taken and recited or dramatized for different occasions.

Many of the passages in the *Book of Good Love* deal with advice about love and are illustrated via amusing and captivating tales. There is a lengthy narrative, based on the Medieval Latin *Pamphilus de Amore*, about a love affair between a man known as Sir Melon (*don Melón*) and a woman called Lady Sloe (*doña Endrina*).² Much of the fruit imagery of this tale is original with Juan Ruiz. Also of note is the character named Convent-trotter (*Trotaconventos*), who is the first go-between to appear in literature written in Spanish and is a precursor to another famous go-between, Celestina, a major character in the famed *Celestina*, a work that appeared about a century and a half after the *Book of Good Love*.

Another lengthy story, based on a French text, is simultaneously a mock-epic and an allegorical battle between Sir Carnal (*don Carnal*) and Lady Lent (*doña Cuaresma*), where the armies are composed of land animals and sea creatures. First, just before Lent, Sir Carnal is defeated in a surprise battle and then, at the end of Lent, Lady Lent is defeated by a well-nourished Sir Carnal (thanks to the help of his Jewish friends who free him from prison and feed him on Palm Sunday).

There is a total of twenty-five Aesopic fables located principally in two segments of the book. The first is a diatribe against the evils of love that cause the Seven Deadly Sins, with each sin exemplified by a fable. Later in the book, Lady Garoza³ (a nun) and Convent-trotter (the Archpriest's go-between) hold a debate via fables on a proposed love affair between the nun and the Archpriest. Interspersed in other sections of the book are more fables and tales of various attempted love affairs with a variety of women as well as religious poems to the Virgin Mary plus parodies and a number of religious satires.

The *Book of Good Love*'s many amusing and entertaining stories can be viewed as part of the medieval *exemplum* tradition, which focus on tales about situations to be avoided by those who wanted to lead good lives. The moral purpose in these tales and in passages about life in general is essential to an understanding of the *Book of Good Love*.

This brief anthology contains some representative samples from the *Book of Good Love* as well as suggestions for further reading about the book.

1. The Debate Between the Greeks and the Romans.

This passage, illustrated through a debate via gestures, is about the various ways in which the same text can be interpreted, depending on the background of the interpreter. This concept is important, moreover, for our understanding of the deliberate ambiguousness of the *Book of Good Love*. The debate is best understood when two people act it out. It is important to remember that the *Book of Good Love* was written primarily to be recited out loud to a live audience and not as a book to be read silently and individually.

² The *endrina* is the fruit of the wild European plum, or "sloe."

³ *Garoza* means "bride" in Arabic (*arusa*), hence here we have an allusion to the nun in her proverbial role as the "bride of Christ."

Aquí fabla de la disputaçión que los griegos é los romanos en uno ovieron⁴

Entiende bien mis dichos e piensa la sentençia,
Non contesca contigo como al dotor de Greçia
Con el rribal de Rroma é su poca sabençia,
Quando demandó Roma á Greçia la çiencia.

Asy fué, que rromanos las leyes non avien,
Fueron las demandar á griegos, que las tenien;
Rrespondieron los griegos que non las merescien
Nin las podrían entender, pues que tan poco sabien.

Pero, si las querien para por ellas usar,
Que ante les convenie con sus sabios desputar,
Por ver si las entenderían é merescian levar:
Esta rrespuesta fermosa davan por se escusar.

Rrespondieron rromanos que les plazía de grado;
Para la disputaçión pusieron pleito firmado;
Mas porque non entenderian el lenguaje non usado,
Que desputasen por señas, por señas de letrado.

Pusieron día sabido todos por contender,
Ffueron rromanos en cuyta, non sabiendo que
fazer,
Porque non eran letrados ni podrian entender
Á los griegos dotores ni á su mucho saber.

Estando en su cuyta dixo un çibdadano
Que tomasen un rribal, un vellaco romano:
Quales Dios le mostrase fer señas con la mano,
Que tales las feziere: fuéles conssejo sano.

Here we speak about the debate between the Greeks and the Romans

46 Understand well what I say and think about its meaning. I hope that you do not experience anything like what happened between the Doctor from Greece and the ignorant ruffian from Rome when Rome asked Greece for knowledge.

47 It so happens that the Romans did not have any laws, but the Greeks did and they went to ask the Greeks for theirs. The Greeks answered that the Romans did not deserve them and that they could not understand them, given their lack of knowledge.

48 But if the Romans wanted laws in order to use them, before doing so, it would be a good idea for them to have a debate with the Greek wise men in order to see if they could understand them and if so, receive them. The Greeks gave this elegant response as a way to get out of their obligation.

49 The Romans answered that they would very much like to participate in the debate and they signed a document to secure a date. But they added that since they did not understand the language that the Greeks spoke, they needed to debate by means of gestures, the sign language used by learned men.

50 They all decided on a date for the contest. The Romans were very sad and did not know what to do because they were not learned nor could they understand either the Greek doctors or the extensive knowledge they had.

51 In the midst of their worries, a citizen said that they should pick a hoodlum, a Roman ruffian, and that they should make use of him, and have him use the signs that God would send to his hand. This was sound advice.

⁴Numbers next to each stanza refer to the number of the stanza, a convention followed in editions of the *Book of Good Love*.

Ffueron á un vellaco muy grand é muy ardid;
Dixieron: “Nos avemos con los griegos conbid’
Por desputar por señas: lo que tu quisieres pid’
E nos dártelo hemos; escúsanos desta lid.”

52 They went to speak with a very strong and daring ruffian and they said to him, “The Greeks have invited us to have a debate through signs and you have to represent us. Ask for whatever you want and we will give it to you so that you can save us in this predicament.”

Vestiéronle muy rricos paños de grand valía,
Como si fuese dotor en la filosofía;
Subió en alta cathreda, dixo con bavoquía:
“D’oy máys vengán los griegos con toda su porfía.”

53 They dressed him up in very fancy, costly clothing as if he were a doctor of philosophy. He went up to the podium and said pompously: “Let the Greeks come forth today with all their challenges.”

Vino ay un griego, dotor muy esmerado,
Escogido de griegos, entre todos loado;
Sobió en otra cathreda, todo el pueblo juntado.
Començaron sus señas, como era tratado.

54 One Greek man arose, a very distinguished doctor, chosen by the Greeks and praised among all. He went up to another podium, with the entire town present. They began their debate with signs, according to how it had been arranged.

Levantóse el griego, sosegado, de vagar,
E mostró sólo un dedo, qu’ está çerca el pulgar;
Luego se assentó en ese mismo lugar;
Levantóse el rribaldo, bravo, de malpagar.

55 The Greek arose calmly and slowly and showed only one finger (his index finger), the one that is next to the thumb. Then he sat down in the same place. The ruffian arose, ferocious and in a bad mood.

Mostró luego tres dedos fasia el griego tendidos,
El pulgar é otros dos, que con él son contenidos
En manera de arpón, los otros dos encogidos
Assentóse el neçio, catando sus vestidos.

56 He showed three fingers, stretched out toward the Greek; they were his thumb, index and middle fingers, together, in a form similar to that of a harpoon, with the two fingers contracted. The idiot sat down, looking at his clothing.

Levantóse el griego, tendió la palma llana,
E assentóse luego con su memoria sana:
Levantóse el vellaco con fantasía vana,
Mostró puño çerrado: de porfía a gana.

57 The Greek stood up and showed the palm of his hand and then sat down calmly, with a sound mind. The ruffian arose and, with a vain fantasy, showed a clenched fist, indicating that he wished to quarrel.

A todos los de Greçia dixo el sabio griego:
“Meresçen los rromanos las leys, non gelas niego.”
Levantáronse todos en paz é en sosiego:
Grand onrra ovo Rroma por un vil andariego.

58 The Greek wise man said to the people from Greece: “I cannot deny that the Romans deserve the laws.” Everyone arose calmly and in peace: Rome obtained a great honor by means of a no-good vagabond.

Preguntaron al griego qué fué lo que dixiera
Por señas al rromano é qué le rrespondiera.
Diz’: “Yo dixé qu’ es un Dios; el rromano dixo
qu’era
Uno en tres personas, é tal señal feziera.

59 They asked the Greek about what he had said by sign language to the Roman and what the latter had answered. He said: “I said that there is one God; the Roman said that He was one

“Yo dixé que era todo á la su voluntad;
Rrespondió qu'en su poder lo teni' e diz' verdad.
Desde vi que entendíen é creyen la Trinidad,
Entendí que merescíen de leyes çertenidad.”

Preguntaron al vellaco cuál fuera su antojo.
“Dixom' que con su dedo me quebraria el ojo:
Desto ove grand pesar é tomé gran enojo.
Rrespondile con saña, con yra é con cordojo

“Que yo le quebraría, ante todas las gentes,
Con dos dedos los ojos, con el pulgar los dientes.
Díxome enpós esto que le parase mientes,
Que m' daría grand palmada en los oydos
rretenientes.

“Yo le respondí que l' daría tal puñada,
Que en tiempo de su vida nunca le viés' vengada.
Desde vió la pelea tan mal aparejada,
Dexó de amenazar do non le preçian nada.”

Por esto diz' la pastraña de la vieja fardida:
“Non há mala palabra, si non es á mal tenida;”
Verás que bien es dicha, si bien fues' entendida:
Entiende bien mi libro: avrás dueña garrida.⁵

La bulrra que oyeres, non la tengas por vil;
La manera del libro entiéndela sutil:
Saber el mal, desir bien, encobierito, doñeguil
Tú non fallarás uno de trovadores mill . . .

God in three persons and he expressed that
with his sign.

60 “I said that everything was according to God's
will and he answered that everything was in
God's power. The Roman told the truth. Since
I saw that they understood and believed in the
Trinity, I understood that they certainly
deserved laws.”

61 They asked the ruffian about his interpretation
and he answered: “The Greek told me that he
would smash one of my eyes with his finger
and this made me sad and very angry. With
anger, rage, and fury, I answered

62 “that I, in front of all the people, would smash
his eyes with both my fingers and his teeth with
my thumb. Then he told me to think about this
because he would give me a big slap that would
resound throughout my ears.

63 “I answered him that I would give him a blow
so severe that he would never be able to avenge
it for the rest of his life. Since he saw that the
fight was so unequal, he stopped threatening
me because he saw that his threats were in
vain.”

64 Because of this, as the wise old lady says:
“There are no bad words except for those that
are understood as bad.” You will see that this is
well stated if you understand it well. If you
understand my book well, you will have a lovely
lady.

65 Do not take as a bad one the joke that you
hear; this book is understood in a very subtle
manner. An awareness of evil and a way of
saying things well, with hidden meanings, in a
pleasant manner, is something that you will find
very rarely, only with one in every thousand
troubadours. . . .

⁵The widely accepted interpretation for “dueña garrida” (literally, ‘lovely lady’) is that Ruiz is being satirical here. Indeed, the expression can also be taken metaphorically to symbolize a nice reward on an intellectual level.

De todos estrumentos yo, libro, só pariente:
Bien ó mal, qual puntares, tal dirá çiertamente;
Qual tu dezir quesieres, y faz punto é tente:
Ssy puntarme sopieres, sienpre me avrás en miente.

70 I, book,⁶ am related to all the instruments and no matter how well or how poorly you play me, you will receive a message. Say whatever you wish and play your own notes and think about that. If you know how to play me, you will have me with you always in your memory.⁷

⁶ Here, in one of the most famous stanzas of the *Book of Good Love*, the book, personified, addresses its audience directly.

⁷ The metaphor of interpreting the words of a book in terms of playing the notes written for a musical instrument is the prevailing interpretation here, although it has been argued that it can be extended to the interpretation of laws. This type of double meaning is common in the *Book of Good Love*.

2. The Story of Pitas Payas, Painter from Brittany.⁸

This comic tale imitates the style of a popular literary genre in France, known as the *fabliau*. In this tale, the woman is able to blame her husband for her own infidelity, a pattern which is typical of this type of tale wherein women are able to use their intelligence and wit to escape from compromising situations.

Enxienplo de lo que contesció á don Pitas Payas, pintor de Bretañaia

Del qu' olvyda la muger te diré la fazaña:
Sy vieres que es burla, dyme otra tan maña.
Era don Pitas Pajas⁹ un pyntor de Bretañaia;¹⁰
Casó con muger moça, pagávas' de conpañia.

Antes del mes cunplido dixo él: “Nostra dona,
Yo volo¹¹ yr á Frandes, portaré muyta dona.”¹²
Ella diz': “Monsener,¹³ andés en ora bona;
Non olvidés casa vostra nin la mia presona.”

Dixol' don Pitas Payas: “Doña de fermosura,
Yo volo fer en vos una bona fygura,
Porque seades guardada de toda altra locura.”
Ella diz': “Monssener, fazet vuestra mesura.”

Pyntol' so el onbligo un pequeno cordero.
Fuese don Pytas Pajas á ser novo mercadero.
Tardó allá dos anos, muncho fué tardinero,
Façías' le á la dona un mes año entero.

Story of what happened to Sir Pitas Payas, a painter from Brittany

474 I'm going to tell you the story of a man who forgot about his wife. If you see that it is a joke, tell me another one just like it. Once upon a time there was a painter named Sir Pitas Payas who was from Brittany. He married a very young woman and enjoyed her company.

475 Before a month was over, he said, “My lady, I want to go to Flanders and I will bring back many gifts for thee.”¹⁴ She said, “My Lord, go and I wish thee good luck. Do not forget about thy home or about me.”

476 Sir Pitas Payas said to her, “Mistress of all beauty, I want to paint on thee a beautiful image in order to shield thee from all kinds of madness.” She said, “My Lord, do what thou thinkest is appropriate.”

477 He painted a little lamb below her belly-button and then went off to his new job as a merchant. He spent two years in Flanders; he was very late

⁸ Critics have not been able to find a written source for this story among the famed *fabliaux* but believe that it may have been popular in folkloric tales passed on orally during Juan Ruiz's lifetime in fourteenth-century Europe.

⁹ Although commonly referred to by critics as “Pitas Payas,” even within the manuscripts, the character's name is also spelled “Pytas” and “Pajas.” This is an example of the varied spelling typically found in medieval manuscripts.

¹⁰ Some critics believe that the *Bretañaia* (Brittany) in this tale refers to an area in Cataluña or Northeastern Spain, near the border with France.

¹¹ “I desire” (pseudo-French for *je veux*).

¹² Note the pun with the *dona* (“lady”) in the previous verse. Here *dona* means gifts. In the previous line it means “lady” (*dueña*).

¹³ “Sir” (pseudo-French for *monsieur*).

¹⁴ I am grateful to Professor Gene Bell-Villada of Williams College for suggesting the use of “thee” and “thou” as a way to approximate in English Juan Ruiz's use of pseudo-French in the dialogue of this section. It is important to remember that this tale parodies the style of the *fabliaux* from France.

- Como era la moça nuevamente casada,
Avíe con su marido fecha poca morada;
Tomó un entendedor é pobló la posada,
Desfízos' el cordero, que dél non fynca nada.
- Quando ella oyó que venía el pyntor,
Muy de priessa enbió por el entendedor;
Díxole que le pyntase, como podiesse mejor,
En aquel logar mesmo un cordero menor.
- Pyntóle con la gran priessa un eguado carnero
Conplido de cabeça, con todo su apero;
Luego en ese día vino el mensajero:
Que ya don Pytas Pajas desta venía çertero.
- Quando fué el pyntor ya de Frandes venido,
Ffué de la su muger con desdén resçebido;
Desque en el palaçio ya con ella estido,
La señal que l' fezeria non la echó en olvido.
- Dixo don Pitas Pajas: “Madona, sy vos plaz”¹⁵
Mostratme la figura é ¡aiam' buen solaz!”
Diz' la muger: “Monseñer, vos mesmo la catat:
Fey¹⁶ y ardidamente todo lo que vollaz.”¹⁷
- Cató don Pitas Pajas el sobredicho logar,
E vydo grand carnero con armas de prestar.
“¿Cómo, madona, es esto ó cómo pode estar,
Que yo pynté corder, é trobo¹⁸ este manjar?”
- Como en este fecho es syenpre la muger
Sotil é malsabyda, diz': “¿Cómo, monsseñer,
En dos anos petid¹⁹ corder non se fer carner?
Veniésedes tenplano: trobaríades corder.”
- in returning. To his wife each month seemed like a year.
- 478 Since the young woman was recently married and had barely lived with her husband, she acquired a lover who came to live with her. Over time, the lamb was erased and there was nothing left of the painting.
- 479 When she found out that the painter was on his way home, the wife quickly summoned her lover and told him to paint, as best he could, a young lamb in the same place as the other one.
- 480 With his great haste, he painted for her an adult ram, with a well-formed head complete with two enormous horns. Later that same day the messenger arrived to announce that Sir Pitas Payas was definitely on his way.
- 481 When the painter arrived from Flanders, his wife received him with disdain. From the moment he was back with her in their chamber, he had not forgotten about the painting he had done on her.
- 482 Sir Pitas Payas then said to her, “My Lady, please show me the image and let us have some fun!” His wife answered him, “My Lord, look with thine own eyes and do there passionately whatever thou wishest.”
- 483 Sir Pitas Payas looked at the aforementioned location and saw a large ram with impressive weapons, and said, “My Lady, what is this or how can it happen that I painted a lamb and now I'm finding all this meat?”
- 484 Since in this situation women are always subtle, evil and knowledgeable, she said, “My Lord, how can it be that in two years every small lamb is not expected to turn into a ram? If thou hadst arrived earlier, thou wouldst have found thy little lamb.”

¹⁵ “Please” (pseudo-French for *s'il vous plaît*).

¹⁶ “Do” (pseudo-French for *faites*).

¹⁷ “Wish” (pseudo-French for *voulez*).

¹⁸ “I find” (pseudo-French for *je trouve*).

¹⁹ “Small” (pseudo-French for *petit*).

Por ende te castiga, non dexes lo que pides:
 Non seas Pitas Pajas, para otro non errides.
 Con dezires fermosos á la muger conbydes:
 Desque telo prometa, guarda non lo olvides.

485 Thus, in order to avoid punishment, do not ignore your own request. Do not be a Pitas Payas who was deceived by another. Lure the woman with beautiful words and from the moment she promises herself to you, be careful not to forget her.

3. Fable of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse.

This is from a debate between a go-between (Convent-trotter) and a nun (Lady Garoza) over a possible affair between the nun and the Archpriest in which the two women use Aesopic fables to illustrate their points of view. At the end of the debate, Lady Garoza agrees to talk with the Archpriest and has a platonic relationship with him, and as such, is an example of “good love.”²⁰ Here, in a passage from the debate, the wise nun chides the go-between for trying to deceive her and defends her own lifestyle, comparing it with that of the country mouse against that suggested by the go-between, represented by the city mouse.

Ensiemplo del mur de Monferrado é del mur de Guadalhajara

“Mas temo é hé rreçelo que engañada sea,
 Non querría me fuese, como al mur del aldea
 Con el mur de la villa, yendo á faser enplea:
 Desirte hé la fasaña é fynque la pelea.

1369 [The nun said], “I’m afraid and suspect that you are deceiving me. I do not want to be like the country mouse when he went to market with the city mouse. I have to tell you the story and I hope to finish the debate.

“Mur de Guadalhajara un lunes madrugava,
 Fuese á Monferrado, en el mercado andava;
 Un mur de franca barva rresçebiól’ en su cava,
 Conbidól’ á yantar é dióle una hava.

1370 “The mouse from Guadalajara²¹ got up early one Monday morning and went to market in Mohernando.²² While he was at the market he met a mouse with a nice beard²³ who received him in his little cave. He invited him to eat and gave him a bean.

“Están en mesa pobre, buen gesto é buena cara;
 Con la poca vianda buena voluntad para,

1371 “They were at a very poor table, yet with good appearance and good conversation, they finished

²⁰ Scholars have debated as to whether or not the affair with Lady Garoza was platonic (good love—*buen amor*) or physical (crazy love—*loco amor*) since her death shortly after her encounter with the Archpriest can be interpreted either literally (her ceasing to live) or figuratively (her submitting to her lover’s physical advances). Nevertheless, the preponderance of the evidence in the entire debate indicates a platonic relationship between the nun and the Archpriest.

²¹ Guadalajara is located near Hita and was an important city in fourteenth-century Spain.

²² Mohernando is a village in Spain near Guadalajara.

²³ Critics have pointed out that real mice do not have beards and thus this is a parody of the proverbial beard as a symbol for someone important who deserves much respect (for example, the Cid and his beard) commonly found in the Middle Ages.

A los pobres manjares el plaser los rrepara:
Pagós' del buen talante mur de Guadalhajara.

the meal well with little food and plenty of good will. The pleasure made up for the meager fare. The mouse from Guadalajara was very pleased with the cordiality.

“La su yantar comida, el manjar acabado,
Conbidó el de la villa al mur de Monferrado,
Que el martes quisiese yr veer su mercado,
E como él fué suyo, fuese él su conbidado.

1372 “When they finished their dinner, the food all gone, the city mouse invited the mouse from Mohernando to visit his market the following Tuesday and just as he was first his guest, the country mouse would now be entertained by the city mouse.

“Ffué con él á ssu casa é diól' mucho de queso,
Mucho tosino lardo, que non era salpreso,
Enxundias é pan cocho syn medida é syn peso:
Con esto el aldeano tóvos' por byenapreso.

1373 “The country mouse went with the city mouse to his house and the city mouse gave him lots of cheese, lots of fresh unsalted bacon, lard, and baked bread with no limits as to weight or quantity. With this the country mouse was very pleased.

“Manteles de buen lino, una blanca talega,
Byen llena de farina: el mur ally se apega;
Mucha onrra le fiso é serviçio que l' plega,
Alegría é buen rostro con todo esto s' allega.

1374 “There were tablecloths made of quality linen, and a white sack filled with flour, which really pleased the country mouse, who felt very honored. Added to this there was happiness along with smiling faces.

“Está en mesa rrica mucha buena vyanda,
Un manjar mijor que otro á menudo ay anda,
E demas buen talante: huésped esto demanda:
Solás con yantar buena todos omes ablanda.

1375 “On a richly laid-out table there was an abundance of food. Each dish seemed better than the previous one. Moreover, there was much good will, something that should take place with every guest. The pleasure from a good meal always has a calming effect on men.

“Do comién é folgavan, en medio de su yantar
La puerta del palaçio començó á ssonar:
Abriela su señora, dentro quería entrar,
Los mures con el miedo foxieron al andar.

1376 “While they were eating and having fun, in the middle of their dinner, the door of the banquet hall started to creak. The lady of the house started to enter, and the mice, very fearful, fled while she was walking in.

“Mur de Guadalhajara entróse en su forado,
El huésped acá é allá fuya deserrado:
Non tenía lugar çierto do fuese manparado,
Estido á lo oscuro á la pared arrimado.

1377 “The mouse from Guadalajara entered into his hole, but his guest was confused and went scurrying around all over the place. There was no secure spot where he could find refuge. Finally he found a dark cranny, hugging up against the wall.

“Çerrada ya la puerta é pasado el temor,
Estava el aldeano con fiebre é con tremor;
Falagábale el otro é diz': ‘Amigo señor,
Alégrate é come de lo que as sabor.

1378 “After the door was closed and the terror had gone away, the country mouse was feverish and was trembling. The other one calmed him down and said, ‘Friend, sir, cheer up and eat the delicious food.

- ‘Este manjar es dulce é sabe como la miel.
Dixo el aldeano: ‘Venino yase en él:
Al que teme la muerte el panar sabe á fiel;
A ty solo es dulce: tú solo come dél.
- 1379 ‘This is sweet food and tastes like honey.’
The country mouse answered, ‘There is
poison in this food. To the person who fears
death, the honeycomb tastes like gall. It
tastes sweet only to you. Eat it alone and by
yourself.
- ‘Al ome con el miedo non sabe dulce cosa,
Non tiene voluntat con vida temerosa:
Temiendo en la muerte la miel non es sabrosa,
Todas cosas amargan en vida peligrosa.
- 1380 ‘The man who is fearful cannot taste
sweetness. A man who has a life full of fear
has no free will. While he fears death, honey
does not taste good. Everything becomes
bitter in a life filled with danger.
- ‘Más quiero rroer favas seguro é en paz,
Que comer mill manjares corrido é syn solaz:
Las viandas preçiadadas con miedo son agraz,
Todo es amargura do mortal miedo yaz’.
- 1381 ‘I prefer to nibble on beans secure and in
peace rather than eat a thousand meals
bothered and without happiness. Expensive
foods are bitter when accompanied by fear.
Everything is bitter where there is a fear of
death.
- ‘Porque tanto me tardo, aquí todo me mato,
Del miedo que cogí, quando bien me lo cato,
Cómo estava solo: sy veniera el gato,
Ally me alcançara é me diera mal rrato.
- 1382 ‘While I linger here, everything seems about
to kill me because of the fear I had. When I
consider that I was all-alone, I imagine that if
a cat had come along, he would have come
after me and treated me pretty poorly.
- ‘Tú tyenes grandes casas, mas ¡ay mucha
compaña!
Comes muchas viandas: ¡aquesto te engaña!
Buena es mi pobresa en ssegura cabaña:
Que el ome mal pisa é el gato mal rascaña.
- 1383 ‘You have large homes but there is a lot of
company! You eat a lot of food but that
deceives you! My poverty is good in a secure
little hut because here a man can flatten you
with his foot and a cat can claw you to death.
- ‘En paz é segurança es rrica la pobresa;
Al rrico temeroso es pobre su rriqueza:
Tyene syenpre rreçelo con miedo é tristesa:
La pobredat alegre es muy noble rriqueza.’
- 1384 ‘With peace and security poverty is wealth.
With fear, the rich man’s wealth is poverty.
His wealth makes him always suspicious,
bringing him fear and unhappiness. Happy
poverty is wealth that is very noble.’
- [La monja concluyó], “Más valen en convento
las sardinas saladas.
Fasyendo á Dios serviçio con las dueñas
onrradas,
Que perder la mi alma con perdises assadas,
E fynçar escarnida com’ otras deserradas.”
- 1385 [The nun concluded], “Salted sardines in the
convent are worth more, while I do God
good service with honorable women, than
losing my soul to roasted partridges and
winding up dishonored like other women
who have gone astray.”

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Online resources:

- Videoclip of the Pitas Payas tale, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cb7iGfikZy4>
- Extensive bibliography along with further information on the *Book of Good Love*: <http://my-lba.com>